

People & Health Overview Committee, 19 December 2022

What we have learned about our draft Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategies

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Background

Commissioning for A Better Life for the People of Dorset

Our Overarching
Commissioning Strategy
for Adult Services 2022-27

We will work with the communities and people of Dorset, with our partners, and with the social care market, to plan and deliver the right support, at the right time and in the right place. We will develop a modern, responsive social care system, using the best digital tools and personalised options for people to arrange their own support. Our social care system will first and foremost support people to remain independent, making best use of their own strengths and assets and those of their communities to support themselves, knowing that high quality and safe services are available when their needs become greater.



Commissioning for A Better Life for Older People with Support Needs in Dorset

Our Strategy 2022-27

With a higher over-65 population than anywhere else in the country, it's especially important that Dorset provides the opportunity for a great quality of life for older people. We want to work with residents, communities and local service providers to continue to strengthen the supportive community networks of Dorset, develop housing and other infrastructure that supports people to make the best of their strengths and age well, and ensure that the best quality information, support and services are in place as people's health and care needs increase.



Commissioning for A Better Life for Working-Age People with Support Needs in Dorset

Our Strategy 2022-27

Working age adults with care and support needs living in Dorset have meaningful and fulfilling lives within their own community. The services commissioned by Dorset Council will be ambitious for the people they support, working to promote inclusion, recovery, and progression, and ensuring people are at the centre of what we do.



Commissioning for A Better Life for Carers in Dorset

Our Strategy 2022-27

We want to identify potential carers of the future, register identified carers, support them throughout their caring journey and reach individuals at risk before they reach crisis. We want carers supported across the whole system, and for carers to be acknowledged and recognised as an important role by everyone, not just Adult Social Care.



- Four strategies presented at Overview Committee on 28 June
- Comments included:
 - Strategies were complex. Felt like there was too much in them
 - The voice of a person with a learning disability should be captured, rather than their parents speaking for them
 - Positive support for Shared Lives
 - Concerns about underutilised care home beds
 - Emphasis on the importance of involving carers
- Accompanied by outline plan for engaging with the public, staff and partners over the following months
- Programme commenced September, through to November

The Engagement Process

What we did

- Six Roadshow events, centred around each locality within the county, with mornings dedicated to staff engagement and afternoons for the public to engage
- Nine further 'drop-in' listening sessions at locations around the county
- Online opportunity to comment, either by form or by email
- Promoted via press release, social media and local radio. Three dedicated newsletters sent out.
- Promoted by email to all Council Members on 16 September with two further follow-up reminders, and to Members of Town and Parish Councils (via clerks)
- Circulated to members of the A Better Life stakeholder group (statutory and VCS partners) for sharing amongst their networks and contacts

Feedback gathered

- Not a high uptake from the public, although those conversations that took place were very insightful
- Wide range of contributions from front-line staff, identifying what gets in the way of providing the best support to people
- Many hundreds of 'post-it' note comments, which have been collated, grouped and themed – the source material is around 30 pages of comments
- The themes presented here are a high-level summary of the comments, with most impact for the strategies
- **All of this information, whether it directly changes the strategies or not, will remain available to colleagues to guide implementation of the plans.**

Generally, about the strategies

Make the strategies more accessible



We are working now to make the final strategies shorter, more direct and easier to for people to read

“A Better Life”? What does that mean?



The overall strategy ‘strapline’ has been in use for some time, and we know that we need to do more to draw out what it means. Enabling people to live a good life, or the best life possible, were possible preferences.

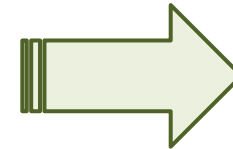
More about how to manage demand for services



So much of what is in the strategies is about reducing demand for services by helping people to build on their own strengths, both personal and in the community, to live independently for longer. We will review how we present this so that the links are clearer.

Quote: about the importance of co-production/listening

I am so grateful to the Social Care people for the opportunity to tell them about my own experience of caring, and for turning their heads round to listening mode. That is very rare in our current world!



We absolutely agree that it is important to listen to people who draw on support, and those around them, as we develop services. That is why this engagement exercise is only the beginning of how we involve people in the journey ahead.

We have also established a growing 'Expert by Experience' programme to help us shape services in the future.

Points about the 'overarching' strategy

We need to build the care workforce, making it a more attractive career, with progression opportunities



Absolutely critical to the future of adult social care. Many of our plans reference this. As well as improving basic terms and conditions and valuing jobs in care, our work across the Integrated Care Partnership is important, for example, how we support care workers to become trusted assessors, and help them progress their career through these routes.

You use 'community' a lot. What do you mean by that?



This is a really important challenge. We must expand what we mean, even though the answer must be a very flexible definition: maybe towns and villages, maybe a small network of friends, and all points in between.

Digital access and self-service needs to be slick and modern, and not need people to repeat their story



We agree, and this is part of the work that we are doing to reform the way people access social care.

Many points were also made that echo and strengthen what is in our strategies, including...

- ✓ Direct payments and individual service funds need to be easier to use
- ✓ There needs to be more Personal Assistants for people to employ
- ✓ People need more help to understand what technology can do for them
- ✓ The information and advice offer needs to be expanded and made easier to understand and access
- ✓ People need to be encouraged to plan earlier for possible care needs, and need better access to adaptations, tailored housing options, and equipment

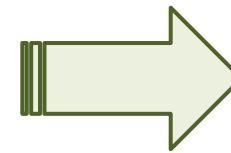
Quotes: ease of access and a 'personal' touch

“*There is no way of getting hold of anyone prior to a crisis... with social workers being so hard to get hold of, there is no preventive work happening, and you can only see someone in a crisis.*”

“*There are so many members of the public do not own/use technology and need a friendly face.*”



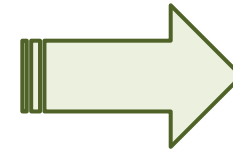
Both in our plans for expanding prevention, and in our vision for better information and advice, we recognise that the “personal touch” and a more responsive service is critical to getting people the right support at the right time.



However, the Council’s own staffing resources are often taken up in responding to complex support needs. Part of our answer for balancing these demands is how we are approaching investment into community-based partners, voluntary organisations, and social care providers to work with us on a comprehensive provision of information, advice and crisis response.

Quote: ambitions about housing options for older people

“[The strategy should] support the growth of a thriving older people’s housing sector, which builds enough homes to match growing need and empowers consumers with choice from a diverse range of housing options to suit their needs.”



We agree, and a key next step for the strategies is to make a clearer alignment with the developing Housing Strategy.

Points about the 'working age' strategy

What does "working age mean"?
Where are the cut-offs, and what about those who can never work?



We heard a lot of feedback that this 'framing' of the strategy didn't work for people, and we are working on a different approach [see later].

Day opportunities: specialist support needs; rural communities; flexibility; employment support



Day opportunities are a key part of our strategy, following on from the engagement work the previous summer. All of these elements are in the model proposed although there is possibly the opportunity to be clearer about the importance of more specialist support.

Autism services: need the joint review to guide next steps



The Council is a partner in the autism review along with the NHS, and we have recognised that there is a need to strengthen autism support.

Need multi-agency working arrangements on hoarding



Not currently referenced in the strategy, but we agree that multi-agency complex case management (such as hoarding) would be important, and will add.

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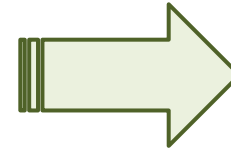
- ✓ Accommodation-based support is critical – we have a service review underway to properly set the direction of our work
- ✓ Shared Lives potential to support more people, also benefit from better networking/peer support
- ✓ More options, more flexibility needed on respite support
- ✓ Birth to Settled Adulthood: better joint work between Children's and Adult services, more accommodation options, better commissioned support, step-down services, better information

Quote: mental health support for young people

“

*More preventative work
around mental health for
young people needed, more
investment in
support/therapy/counselling
to reduce use and need of
services into adulthood*

”



**From an adult services
perspective these are the kinds
of support that will be
considered on the Birth to
Settled Adulthood pathway.**

Points about the 'older people' strategy

Strategy says larger care homes better: some disagreement, smaller are more personal, more comfortable



From an efficiency perspective, 60-80 bed units are ideal, but we need to balance this in the strategy with other considerations – like a more personal, homely feel, and responsiveness of services

Dementia: need more provision for people whose behaviour challenges services, as part of an overall strategy



There will be a separate piece of work to set out in more detail what will be needed in future to meet the support needs of people with dementia. This will be signalled in the strategy, and be one of our co-production priorities.

Intergenerational projects and programmes are needed



This is something currently not referenced in the strategy, and we will consider how to introduce it as a theme.

More OT capacity in reablement, use of available intermediate bed capacity



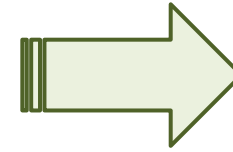
These are emerging developments from the work already done on the strategy, and will be expanded upon in future drafts.

Many points were also made that echo and strengthen what is in our strategies, including...

- ✓ Commissioning: less crisis purchasing, more blocks (though not that hamper creativity/choice)
- ✓ Day opportunities: person-centred rural offer; day centres as focus for other services to come (podiatry, healthchecks, wellbeing, respite). Volunteers? Community hubs pop-up? Outreach?
- ✓ More technology roadshows to demonstrate the possibilities
- ✓ Extra care housing, including 'care village' concept
- ✓ Domiciliary care: more specialist provider options; upskilling; workforce support

Quote: about feeling confident to report concerns

“I was worried about coming and mentioning anything about the problems we had because we don’t want to put at risk the care home placement that he currently has.”



This points to the importance of clear information on safeguarding and standards in our information and advice, and of the routes available to raise concerns, and how we work with providers to investigate safeguarding issues.

Points about the carers' strategy

Carers still not seen as a partner in care delivery



This is reflected in the important sections of the strategy on recognising and valuing carers, but we will explore ways to strengthen it.

Carers' Assessments: more capacity needed; clarity needed about in-house vs. referral to community partners



We know that it is going to be challenging with current staffing resources to meet our ambitions to increase the uptake of carers' assessments. Partnering with carers' organisations (trusted assessor models) can be part of the answer.

Training offer for carers: resilience building, employment support; training on conditions (e.g. dementia)



This is referenced in the strategies but the comments gave us some useful pointers about ways to implement it.

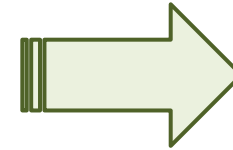
Many points were also made that echo and strengthen what is in our strategies, including...

- ✓ Community offer needs increased visibility
- ✓ Respite offer needs more flexibility – and is direct payment the only way of introducing flexibility?
- ✓ Direct payments are too complicated and off-putting
- ✓ Personal assistants could be alternative for hard-to-find homecare, for giving carers a break
- ✓ Day centre services are a lifeline for carers, providing a break in the day

Quote: rurality and farming



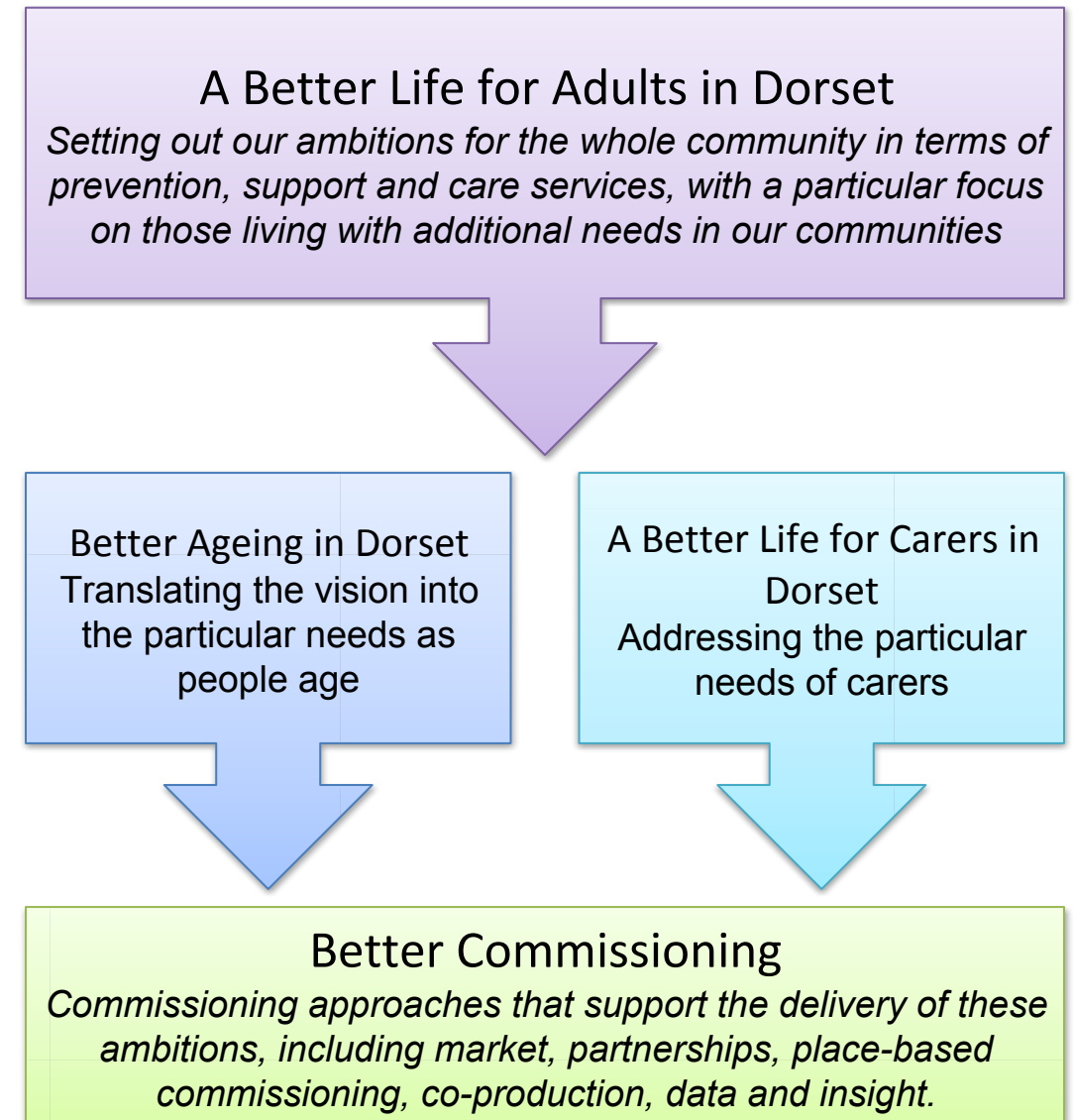
I am really keen to get farms and farmers in the forefront of people’s minds... farms were not mentioned [in the strategies].



This is a useful observation, and we will include reference to this specifically as part of our discussion of delivering services to rural communities. We will also look to include some discussion of this in our co-production plans to further deepen our insight into the issues.

Next steps for the strategies

- Some clear feedback and reflection with colleagues on the documents:
 - They should be shorter, more direct, less discursive
 - They should be more graphical (in presentation of data)
 - 'Working Age' doesn't work as a framing
- Reworking is underway on this basis, for Cabinet in January



Continued co-production

After adoption of revised strategies

- Continue to use the A Better Life consultation pages
- New strategy text uploaded, more accessible formats
- Continued opportunity to comment by webform or email
- Establish regular (not so intensive) roadshow opportunities over the course of the year, with themes and better targeted communication – supported by website pages.
- Programme of thematic consultation to be set up – in part shaped by feedback received during this exercise
- Proposed revision points for strategies so that feedback can be incorporated and they remain 'live'



Improving uptake

- ✓ Take the conversation out to people with an interest – rather than inviting them to us/our events
- ✓ Thematic and targeted, not broad and general
- ✓ Engage community partners to 'broker' links to people, facilitate contact
- ✓ Sustain the conversation, show impact

Priority themes to be explored in 2023

- Direct Payments / Individual Service Funds
 - Continuing to explore how we improve the system
- Day Opportunities
 - Involving people in the design of a new model
- Dementia
 - Opening up the conversation about how we improve dementia support
- Autism
 - Opening up the conversation about how we improve support for Autism,
- Social care reforms/digital
 - New financial arrangements for social care, self-assessment, access to care records
- Birth to Settled Adulthood
 - Continuing the conversation with people who draw on support through transition about improving the service offer

Questions the Committee may wish to consider

- When redrafted, the strategies will establish an ambitious work programme for the years ahead – **how would the Committee like to continue to be involved in strategy development?**
- There are some significant co-production conversations anticipated for the coming year and beyond – **how would the Committee like to help shape these conversations?**
- How might the committee help **future co-production opportunities have greater involvement of local people, communities and organisations?**

How might this work fit with the Committee's work programme?

In summary

It is crucial that we engage with people on the strategies if we are to get them right

Feedback is changing the strategy content – they are currently being worked up for Cabinet

Engagement was just a start of a continued conversation – there will be many further opportunities for people to get involved

We would welcome the committee considering ways in which it can continue to be involved

Any further questions?